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Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), by which the Council requested me to report every 30 days on the status of financial, logistical and administrative arrangements for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and on the extent of the Operation's progress towards full operational capability. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1828 (2008), I will hereafter, submit reports every 60 days on developments relating to UNAMID, the political process, the security and humanitarian situation and all parties' compliance with their international obligations.

2. This report covers the month of July 2008, and reviews the activities of UNAMID, including efforts relating to the deployment of the mission, as well as the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. The report also provides an update on the Darfur political process.

II. Security situation

3. The month of July has seen an extremely worrying increase in violence in Darfur. A series of deadly attacks against UNAMID peacekeepers, a decline in the overall security situation, and general uncertainty regarding the implications of the actions taken by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court led the United Nations to take heightened security precautions in Darfur during the reporting period.

4. UNAMID fell victim to an act of extreme violence on 8 July in the form of a deliberate and well-organized attack on a patrol near Shangil Tobaya, which left seven peacekeepers dead and 22 wounded. This was the most serious attack against UNAMID personnel since the start of the mission. The investigation of the attack is proceeding as a matter of priority. I have condemned the attack in the strongest possible terms and have urged the Government of the Sudan to fulfil its responsibility to immediately identify the perpetrators and hold them accountable.

5. After 8 July, UNAMID faced several more direct attacks, including on the night of 11 July, when there was heavy shooting involving rocket-propelled

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grenades near the UNAMID camp in Zam Zam. The previous day, a UNAMID night patrol comprising five vehicles and two armoured personnel carriers was struck by three rounds of hostile fire about four km from the UNAMID company site in Masteri. There were no casualties, but one bullet did pierce the windscreen of one of the vehicles. On 16 July, a UNAMID officer commanding the For Baranga protection force south-west of El Geneina was shot and killed by unknown armed men. The motive behind the killing remains unknown, but the incident is a grave cause of concern for the safety of all United Nations and other humanitarian personnel in Darfur.

6. In the light of this serious negative trend in the security situation and mindful of possible negative or anti-United Nations reactions to any developments related to the work of the International Criminal Court, the United Nations took a number of steps to adjust to a possible deterioration in the security situation. These included the classification of Darfur as a Phase IV security environment and a related temporary relocation of staff who were deemed non-essential to current operations and ongoing deployment efforts.

7. In the meantime, following the attack on Omdurman on 10 May by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), aerial bombardments increased in Darfur. On 19 July, 15 bombs were reportedly dropped on the villages surrounding Jebel Moon, where JEM forces are reportedly stationed, and air attacks were reported again on 22 July. Aerial attacks were reported in the area controlled by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A)-Abdul Wahid 40 km south-west of El Fasher, including bombings of Gollo on 5 and 21 July. Similar attacks occurred in Southern Darfur: on 15, 17 and 20 July, Antonov aircraft conducted air attacks on SLM/A-Unity and JEM positions in Jebel Adulla, north-east of Nyala. This marks a significant escalation in the intensity of the conflict between the Government of the Sudan and the rebel factions not signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement.

8. In addition, the rapidly increasing banditry in July has substantially hindered UNAMID and humanitarian operations. The number of carjackings increased from 23 in May and 21 in June to 31 in July. Since January 2008, more than 120 vehicles have been hijacked throughout Darfur.

9. Tribal clashes have destabilized Southern Darfur in particular. Fighting over disputed land rights erupted in the western part of Southern Darfur between Tarjem and Beni Halba tribes, resulting in some 80 casualties. During the early part of July, clashes were reported in locations between the Habbaniya and Fallata after the Habbaniya reportedly looted 400 head of cattle from the Fallata. Twenty-three fatalities were reported.

III. Humanitarian situation

10. Heightened insecurity and the accompanying shift to Phase IV required United Nations humanitarian agencies to reduce staff to those who were directly concerned with the five life-saving operations, identified as health, water and sanitation, food security, shelter, and protection. These operations have been functioning at a reduced implementation rate of approximately 20 per cent across the board owing to increased security-related restrictions on movement and lower staff ceilings, while crop failures in several crucial areas of Northern and Southern Darfur created an expanded hunger season. In addition, the rainy season usually increases morbidity

and mortality in the region. In one exception to this trend, World Food Programme food rations will increase from half rations to 75 per cent of full rations in August distributions, as a result of the increased flow of convoys into Northern Darfur to ensure maximum delivery of assistance within Phase IV constraints.

11. Despite the security situation, UNAMID stepped up patrols in rural areas of Sector West during the reporting period to reduce threats and boost the confidence of the population, farmers in particular. This practice will be expanded into Sectors North and South, security permitting. Daily information-sharing between UNAMID and the humanitarian community in Darfur and Khartoum has improved responses to the needs of the civilian population.

12. Nevertheless, with an ongoing reduction in access to beneficiaries related to both insecurity and the rainy season, there is a real risk that the humanitarian situation will decline further in the next six months without a significant improvement in the security situation, even as the needs of 4.5 million beneficiaries, including nearly 2.5 million displaced, approximately 205,000 of whom were displaced this year, continue to grow.

IV. Mission strength

13. As at 31 July, the total strength of UNAMID uniformed personnel was 9,991, including 8,123 military personnel (7,622 troops, 275 staff officers, 158 military observers and 68 liaison officers), and 1,868 police personnel (1,728 individual police officers and one formed police unit of 140 personnel).

14. Recruitment of civilian positions stood at 2,350 of 5,568 authorized posts, or 41 per cent of full capacity. There are 507 international staff currently deployed, 1,642 national staff, and 201 United Nations Volunteers. In addition, UNAMID has 71 staff on short-term temporary assignments from other missions, and employs 1,577 individual contractors. Two hundred international civilian staff and 26 United Nations Volunteers have been selected and are on travel status.

15. With regard to civilian posts, UNAMID continues to focus on the recruitment of senior staff for both mission support and substantive posts.

V. Deployment and operations of UNAMID

16. Preparations for the deployment of additional troops and formed police units to Darfur continue to be hampered by significant logistical challenges and insecurity. During the period under review, the equipment of several military units and formed police units earmarked for UNAMID arrived in the Sudan. However, the movement of formed units, both military and police, to the mission area continues to be severely limited by delays in the movement of cargo into Darfur, delays due to multiple factors: insufficient material-handling equipment, poor road conditions, and difficulties tapping the transport capacity in the local market to meet cargo transport requirements.

17. The United Nations requested the assistance of the Government of the Sudan in addressing the backlog at Port Sudan, streamlining the Customs clearance process for UNAMID cargo, and ensuring security along the main transportation routes. The Government of the Sudan has provided security for two convoys to date, first along

the southern route to Nyala, and most recently along the northern route to El Fasher. Further escorts are planned and it is hoped that the frequency will increase to multiple convoys per week. The mission's limitations in its transportation capacity are being addressed by augmenting inland road transport with cargo airlifts from El Obeid and Port Sudan to El Fasher, Nyala and El Geneina. In addition, the mission is currently in the process of establishing a third party logistics arrangement that will address the limitations of current inland freight contracts.

18. Progress towards full operational capability and the mission's ability to carry out its mandated tasks effectively requires further contributions from Member States. Critical shortfalls include 18 medium-lift helicopters, 6 attack helicopters, one aerial reconnaissance unit, one medium transport unit, one heavy transport unit and one multi-role logistics unit. Four additional light helicopters are still being sought to meet the operational requirements of the mission. Of the authorized strength of 19 formed police units, 12 have been pledged. The United Nations and the African Union are collaborating to identify police-contributing countries that have the capability to deploy the remaining seven units.

19. Despite the continuing difficulties relating to insecurity, including the attack on UNAMID on 8 July, the general increase in the levels of insecurity in Darfur, and mobility difficulties linked to the rainy season, UNAMID continues to conduct patrols and escort activities and carry out monitoring and investigation tasks. A total of 417 confidence-building patrols (including night patrols), 151 escort patrols, 5 administrative patrols and 13 investigation patrols were conducted throughout Darfur during the month of July.

20. Efforts to bring the former battalions of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) up to United Nations standards of strength and equipment are ongoing, but difficulties remain in finalizing procurement and transport of donor-provided equipment into Darfur. The planned rotations are due to begin in October 2008 and current efforts are focused on upgrading the battalions by the time of their rotation.

Police

21. From 2 to 5 July, a 35-vehicle convoy staffed by 20 UNAMID police advisers and 18 UNAMID transport staff and technicians delivered vehicles, fuel and equipment from the El Obeid Logistics Base for El Fasher with an escort provided by the Government of the Sudan. This was the second such convoy to leave El Obeid organized by UNAMID police in July.

22. All UNAMID policing activities were temporarily suspended in mid-July because of the prevailing security situation and the move to Phase IV of the United Nations security plan. Non-essential staff were identified for temporary relocation, including 199 police advisers. The bulk of the police advisers were placed on standby at their sector headquarters, team sites and community policing centres, where they underwent in-service training designed to enhance their safety. The training was also extended to officers relocated to El Obeid and Entebbe. On 20 July, the security situation having stabilized, the UNAMID Police Commissioner authorized a return to normal policing patrols and activities.

23. In order to reassure the local population that UNAMID has a continuing presence during Phase IV, the police launched a crime prevention/public relations

initiative on 20 July, which included overflights of camps of internally displaced persons, visits with the leaders of the displaced and the distribution of literature to six such camps in Northern Darfur.

Mission support

24. Engineering and construction works in all supercamps have not advanced as anticipated. Remedial action is being taken and it is expected that the work will increase considerably in the weeks ahead. Following the crash of an IL-76 aircraft in Khartoum on 30 June, the Government banned all Ilyushin and Antonov flights. However, an exception was created for flights of UNAMID and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), provided the aircraft is not more than 20 years old and is contracted from outside the Sudan. Nevertheless, the ban did result in some delays in the movement of cargo, including emergency food rations for UNAMID personnel.

25. The transportation of equipment required by contractors to complete work in the supercamps was also delayed until authorization to move the materials was received from the Government on 24 July. Finally, the Sudanese Civil Aviation Authority undertook the long-awaited visit to Darfur airports late in July, and this is expected to pave the way for UNAMID to expand parking and apron spaces, as well as undertake other rehabilitation work at the three airports in Darfur.

26. Regarding land, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs transmitted a letter to all Walis in Darfur, requesting them to provide the required land to UNAMID. It is expected that this should facilitate UNAMID efforts to secure the dozen remaining sites it seeks.

27. To enhance the exchange of information with the African Union, secure dedicated telephone and facsimile lines were installed by the United Nations in the office of the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

28. The liquidation exercise of ex-AMIS equipment neared completion in July and 1,003 out of 1,062 vehicles were physically verified for handover to UNAMID. However, a substantial number of ex-AMIS vehicles are not roadworthy because of inadequate maintenance and lack of spare parts. Most of the African Union liquidation team has departed, although many issues relating to the liquidation remain to be addressed. Discussions regarding these issues are ongoing between UNAMID and the African Union.

29. As a result of the deteriorating security situation and shift to Phase IV in Darfur, UNAMID dedicated considerable logistical assets to the temporary relocation of staff, enhancement of security measures, and other contingency measures, including the stockpiling of rations and other critical supplies at team sites. In accordance with the Phase IV security requirements, more than 300 staff members were relocated to Entebbe and El Obeid. Staff members on leave were instructed to remain outside the mission area, while those on travel status were put on hold. In the meantime, the mission will have to take all necessary steps to upgrade operational sites and residences to ensure compliance with staff security standards. With deployment as a top priority, the mission is balancing the need to mobilize resources for deployment efforts while ensuring that appropriate measures are put in place and maintained for the security and safety of United Nations and associated personnel.

VI. Political process

30. The Joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator, Djibrill Yipènè Bassolé, assumed his duties early in August 2008, with a short visit to United Nations Headquarters for briefings and discussions. He will travel to the Sudan at the end of August and will be based in El Fasher.

31. It is not yet clear what impact the announcement by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court that he is seeking an arrest warrant for the President of the Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir, will have on the political process. Meanwhile, the National Congress Party (NCP) has reached out to its partners in the Government of National Unity and traditional political parties. One result was the establishment of a multi-party committee, which was formed to seek a resolution to the Darfur crisis. At the same time, some of the Darfur movements have made public statements claiming that the Sudan is undergoing a constitutional crisis and calling for a new government.

32. The whereabouts and activities of Minni Minawi, signatory to the Darfur Peace Agreement, continue to be a subject of speculation and concern. Minawi is believed to have been in Darfur in the past two months, during which time he has made statements criticizing the lack of commitment of NCP to the Darfur Peace Agreement. However, he reportedly expressed his support of President Al-Bashir with respect to the actions of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. At a rally in Nyala on 24 July, the President called on Minawi to return to Khartoum.

33. Meanwhile, relations between Chad and the Sudan have seen some improvement. On 9 June, the Contact Group for the Dakar Agreement met in Brazzaville. Chad and the Sudan were both represented at a high level and the atmosphere was constructive. The parties agreed to meet again in Dakar two weeks later, at the expert level, to discuss the implementation mechanism to secure the border between the two countries. Following that meeting, which was held from 23 to 26 June, the group met again in Dakar on 17 July. It endorsed the report of the expert meeting, including in relation to the composition of a protection force, the deployment of observers from Chad and the Sudan and a draft budget. During the meeting, it was announced that, in response to an appeal made by the President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, President Al-Bashir had accepted a resumption of diplomatic relations with Chad. The next meeting of the Contact Group will be held in August.

VII. Financial aspects

34. The General Assembly, by its resolution 62/232 B of 20 June 2008, appropriated for the maintenance of UNAMID for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 an amount of $1,499.7 million.

35. As at 30 June 2008, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNAMID amounted to approximately $344.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at 31 May 2008 amounted to $1,759.7 million.

36. Reimbursement of troop- and police-contributing Governments for troop and formed police unit costs has been made for the period up to 31 May 2008, including

reimbursement of troop costs associated with contingent personnel deployed to AMIS for the period from 1 October to 31 December 2007 in accordance with Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), paragraph 5 (a).

VIII. Observations

37. I am deeply concerned by the violence in Darfur and its consequences for civilians. The continuing air strikes in all three States of Darfur, even during the days surrounding President Al-Bashir's visit to the region, cast a shadow over the conciliatory message the President delivered during his visit. I urge all parties to recognize the urgent need to end the suffering of innocent civilians and immediately commit themselves to an unconditional ceasefire.

38. The attack of 8 July on UNAMID in which seven peacekeepers lost their lives further highlights the security risks in Darfur as well as the unreliability of the consent of the parties to the peacekeeping mission. The attack also underlines the importance of the utility and attack air assets that the mission requires in order to protect itself and carry out its tasks throughout its vast area of responsibility. I therefore reiterate my appeal to Council members to urge troop- and police-contributing countries that are in a position to provide these desperately needed capabilities to do so without further delay.

39. In spite of our efforts, deployment will take many more months during which UNAMID will continue to experience serious shortfalls in communications, logistics, medical evacuation and treatment, and air support. This means that UNAMID — which represents a significant investment made by the international community in the search for peace in Darfur — will continue to be extremely vulnerable in the months ahead. I therefore appeal to Member States with influence over the parties to do everything in their power to obtain a renewed commitment from them to the safety and integrity of the peacekeeping force.

40. Even when fully deployed, however, UNAMID cannot be a substitute for a political process. Ultimately, the crisis in Darfur can be resolved only through political negotiations and a comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement. The outstanding requirement for an inclusive political solution warrants urgent attention. If we are to see real progress, decisive political action, which encompasses the whole of the Sudan, is needed. For his part, the Joint Chief Mediator will work to address the fragmentation of the movements, regional dynamics, and the fundamental readiness of the Government to make compromises in the name of peace. His success will hinge on the will of the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue and, equally important, the direct, active and unified engagement of the international community in support of his mediation efforts.

41. The decision of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to seek an arrest warrant for President Al-Bashir has altered the political landscape, although it is too early to assess the impact it will have on the peace process. In the meantime, the Government has provided assurances of cooperation with both UNAMID and UNMIS. This is a sine qua non for the missions to function. However, representatives of the Government have made numerous public statements to the effect that the Court's accession to the Prosecutor's request would force the Government to rescind all agreements with the United Nations, including those relating to peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

42. The International Criminal Court is an independent institution and the United Nations respects the independence of the judicial process. Both UNMIS and UNAMID will continue to conduct their work in an impartial manner, as will the Joint Chief Mediator, cooperating in good faith with all partners so as to further the goal of peace and stability in the Sudan. UNAMID will, in particular, do all it can to carry out its protection mandate and to ensure that there is no interruption in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

43. Without prejudice to the decision of the International Criminal Court on the Prosecutor's application, the international community should continue its engagement and support of the parties' efforts to achieve progress towards resolving the crisis in the Sudan. The key actions required in this regard include the Government's cooperation on the investigations of Ahmed Haroun and Ali Kushayb; a comprehensive Darfur ceasefire and the initiation of substantive peace talks between the Government of National Unity and all major groups in Darfur; and concrete actions to facilitate the deployment of UNAMID, including removal of restrictions on United Nations air operations, lifting of onerous Customs requirements, and immediate deployment of vital non-African military units in Darfur, specifically the infantry battalion from Thailand and the Nepalese force reserve units.

44. Ultimately, we must keep sight of the Darfur conflict in the context of the national framework, and of the entitlement of the people of Darfur to eventually see their concerns expressed through an electoral process. This requires the international community to develop a fully integrated approach to its engagement in the Sudan as a whole.

45. The international community also has the responsibility to seek agreement on the equal importance of peace and justice in trying to meet the needs of the people of Darfur. I urge Member States to spare no efforts in reaching consensus on how to move forward on both goals in order to achieve a comprehensive political solution in Darfur.